

Preventing flu and pneumonia is possible

Because Pneumonia is a common complication of influenza (flu), getting a flu shot every fall can be good prevention for pneumonia.

In the United States, influenza epidemics occur during the winter months, generally December through April, and are responsible for approximately 20,000 deaths each year. Often, pneumonia is the final illness in people who have other serious, chronic diseases. It's the sixth most common cause of death overall, and the most common fatal infection acquired in hospitals.

What Can You Do to Prevent Getting the Flu?

Prevention: FLU SHOTS

The best tool for preventing flu is the flu vaccine and the best time to get a flu shot is from early October to mid-November. The flu shot can be given at any point during the flu season, even if the virus has already begun to spread in your community. You need a flu shot yearly because the virus is constantly changing and new vaccines are developed annually to protect against new strains.

Flu shots are RECOMMENDED if you fit into one of these categories:

- ☒ **People 50 years or older.** These people should also get the pneumonia vaccine. Unlike the flu shot, this is a once in a lifetime shot and can be given at the same time as a flu shot.
- ☒ **Residents of nursing homes, group living arrangements and other long term care facilities.**
- ☒ **Adults and children with chronic heart or lung disease, including asthma.**
- ☒ **Children and teenagers age 6 months to 18 years who are on long-term aspirin treatment.** They could get a serious disease called Reye Syndrome if they catch the flu while taking aspirin.
- ☒ **Adults and children who needed regular medical treatment** or who were in the hospital during the past year because of chronic illness.
- ☒ **People infected with HIV.**
- ☒ **Personnel who care for individuals in group living situations.**

A vaccine is also available to help fight pneumococcal pneumonia, one type of bacterial pneumonia. Your client's doctor can help you decide if it is necessary. It is usually given only to people at high risk of getting the disease and its life-threatening complications.

For more information, visit: <http://www.lungusa.org/diseases/index.html>